



CORDELL BANK, GULF OF THE FARALLONES AND MONTEREY BAY
NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES
JOINT MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

ECOSYSTEM MONITORING – Draft Issue Characterization
April 17, 2003

Problem Statement

Monitoring programs in the National Marine Sanctuary System should provide timely information to assess resource or environmental change with respect to issues of concern or sanctuary management actions. The suite of monitoring information required by sanctuary management includes data from within the sanctuary and from areas outside the boundaries that influence sanctuary waters. Typically, the type of information collected outside sanctuary boundaries is influenced indirectly, at best, by sanctuary management requirements. With the contiguous sanctuaries of Cordell Bank, Gulf of the Farallones, and Monterey Bay NMSs covering substantial portions of the coastal waters in the northern half of California, there is potential for sanctuary management concerns to become a more effective and significant driver for monitoring information throughout the region. However, current sanctuary-based monitoring activities were designed for the individual needs of each sanctuary, not to promote and inform effective and efficient management across sites or influence regional monitoring.

Issue Description

Each of the sanctuaries participating in the joint management plan review has ongoing monitoring activities and reporting mechanism designed to address and inform resource management concerns identified since site designation. GFNMS is involved in several marine mammal and seabird monitoring programs, as well as shoreline, intertidal, coastal ecology, and restoration monitoring. CBNMS shares marine mammal and seabird monitoring efforts with the GFNMS. They also coordinate efforts on an Ecosystems Dynamic Study, which is conducted with the support of many partners. MBNMS has recently designed and committed to the implementation of a Sanctuary Integrated Monitoring Network (SIMoN). This program creates a stable network of ecosystem and issue-based monitoring data to address a critical need for both short and long-term evaluation of the region and resources.

The joint management plan review process provides a unique opportunity to enhance management-based monitoring strategies for the three individual sanctuaries and design an ecosystem monitoring network strategy to coordinate targeted activities among the sites. Ecosystem monitoring efforts may address management issues that transcend the boundaries of an individual sanctuary. The strategies to address these shared concerns will form the basis for a cross-cutting action plan to coordinate monitoring efforts and equipment, institutional partners, and volunteer activities among the sanctuaries. This approach will improve efficiency and effectiveness of monitoring activities and provide more comprehensive information to resource managers involved in decision-making across all three sites.

Objectives for Ecosystem Monitoring?

Goals for Ecosystem Monitoring?

Possible Strategies to Improve Ecosystem Monitoring?

- Coordinated use and testing of new technologies?
- Integrated plan for NOAA/contract shiptime?

- Shared ownership, technical support, maintenance contracts for equipment
- Information management coordination—consistent standards, data access/exchange, regional ecosystem reporting
- Regional coordination of targeted monitoring activities (e.g., marine mammals, seabirds)
- Integration with large scale national and coastal monitoring activities

Current Mechanisms/Programs to Address this Issue?

- Coordinated monitoring activities between Cordell Bank and Gulf of the Farallones
- Sanctuary Integrated Monitoring Network (SIMoN)
- System-wide Monitoring (SWiM)
- West Coast Marine Mammal and Seabird Monitoring Workshop
- Other activities and programs?

Other Working Groups with Relevant Strategies or Performance Measures?

Cordell Bank

- Ecosystem Protection
- Research and Monitoring

Gulf of the Farallones

- Ecosystem Protection
- Introduced Species
- Water Quality

Monterey Bay

- Big Sur Ecosystem Plan
- Ecosystem Protection (7)
- Aquatic Invasive Species
- Water Quality (4)
- Wildlife Disturbance (3)

General Approach?

Outcomes and Products?

- Action plan of ecosystem monitoring strategies for targeted regional coordination.

Suggested Activities/Schedule

April 17—Meeting 1: Establish Objectives, Goals, and Approach

- Provide context of group activities in management plan review process
- Explain purpose of sanctuary advisory councils and working groups
- Establish group structure and decision-making process
- Review management plan structure and requirements of an action plan
- Assess problems with current site-based approaches to ecosystem monitoring
- Define objectives and goals of the ecosystem action plan
- Discuss possible outcomes/products
- Define criteria for evaluating strategies
- Consider methods to incorporate monitoring suggestions of other working groups
- Establish a plan of attack

May 7—Working Group Meeting 2: Issue and Option Development

- Introduce current relevant programs for sanctuary monitoring (e.g., current efforts/initiatives, funding, partnerships, information management)?
- Discuss ecosystem monitoring requirements?
- Refine objectives and goals
- Identify and prioritize options
- Discuss strategies, actions, partners, budget, and performance measures

May 14—Working Group Meeting 3: Recommendation Development

- Review and refine strategies



- Discuss implications to stakeholders
- Identify opportunities and impediments to implementation
- Apply criteria for evaluating strategies
- Agree on recommendations

May 28—Conference Call

- Discuss revisions to recommendation document (draft action plan)

June 1—Action Plan Deadline

June–August—Recommendations Presented to Sanctuary Advisory Councils

Post–August—?

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